

Pledging Allegiance to the Flag

The question has arisen whether there is anything that precludes a public school board from beginning their meetings with the pledge of allegiance.

Neither state nor federal law require or prohibit the recitation of the pledge prior to public school board meetings or prior to or during the school day itself. Iowa Code section 280.5 requires each public school district and each nonpublic school to raise the United States flag and the Iowa state flag "on all school days when weather conditions are suitable."

If a school district decides to have the pledge recited, no student may be compelled to recite it or even to stand. This was settled by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1943 (*West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*). School districts may require that students be respectfully silent during the recitation of the pledge.